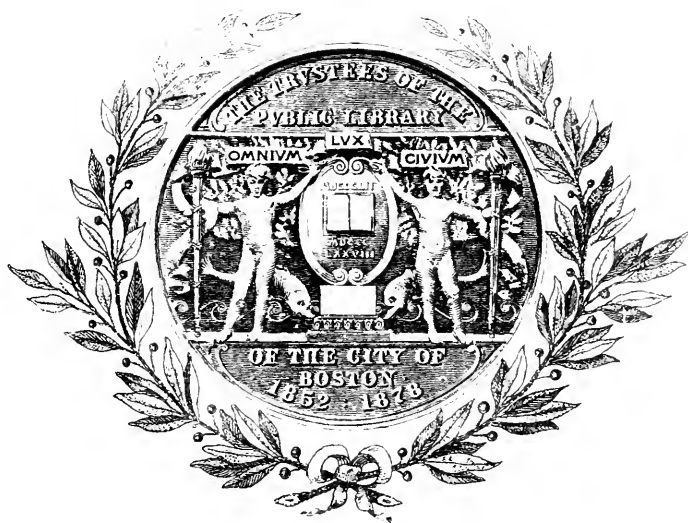
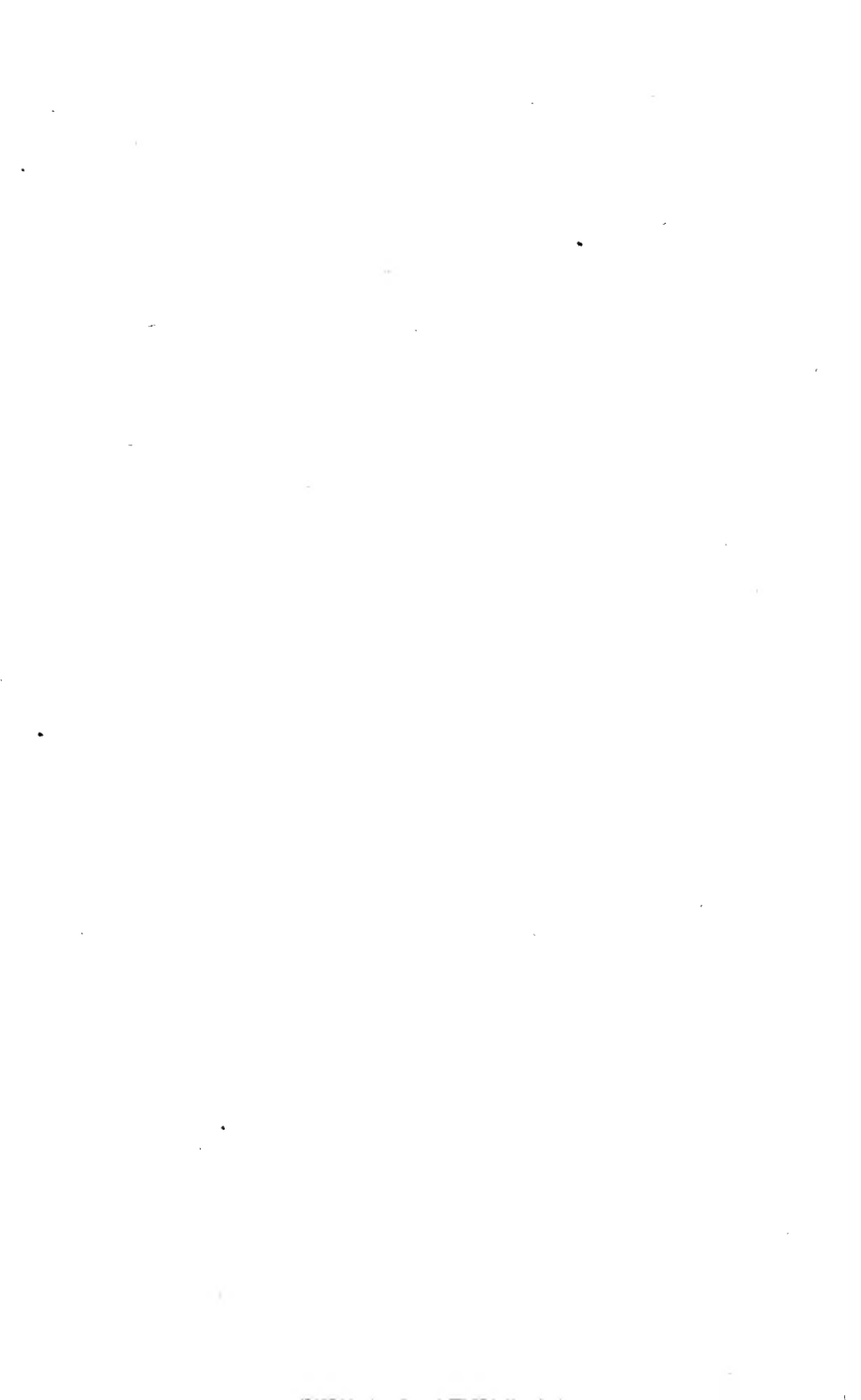


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Our Private Theatricals;

OR,

A GUIDE TO THE

CONTAINING PLAIN DIRECTIONS FOR THE

Construction, Arrangement, and Lighting of the Stage, Painting the
Scenery, getting up the Costumes, making the Properties
and Accessories, Hints on Stage Effects.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND DIAGRAMS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A Roaring Farce for Home Performance.



HAPPY HOURS COMPANY,

HOW WE MANAGED

Our Private Theatricals;

OR,

A GUIDE TO THE AMATEUR STAGE.

CONTAINING

PLAIN DIRECTIONS

For the Construction, Arrangement and Lighting of the Stage, Painting the Scenery, getting up the Costumes, making the Properties and Accessories; Instructions for making CALCIUM LIGHTS, etc., etc.

With numerous Illustrations & Diagrams.

PENELOPE ANNE,

A Boering Earcel for Home Performance.

NEW YORK:

HAPPY HOURS COMPANY,

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INTRODUCTION.



Never had I longed so for my holidays. I had counted the weary weeks at Doctor Thwakem's, and had often wished for home; but now I longed with heart and soul for the change. The dark, damp misty streets were hateful to me. The smoke laden sky seemed to oppress my life. I longed for the open country and to roam beneath the trees, leafless though they were, and to gaze at the sky through the network of their interlaved branches. I had not decided as to where I should spend my holidays; but I knew and felt that they would be spent in the country.

It wanted but a few days to Christmas—perhaps a fortnight—when I received a cordial note from my aunt, Mrs. Fitz Hearty, who resides at the pretty watering-place of Chilton. This note decided me. It ran as follows:

“MY DEAR RONALD.—We have been anxiously waiting to hear from you, as to when we should have the pleasure of seeing you. We want you particularly this Christmas, and we know that no one has a better right to you than we have. We are selfish enough to require your aid in an amusing project which has been started here. Your cousins Alice and Kate require your assistance in getting up some amateur theatricals—for a charitable object, of course. You can have your old blue room. Your uncle says the rabbits are in condition, and want thinning, and I know the wild-fowl are plentiful on Lupton Marsh. So we shall expect you; and ‘old Jack’ shall meet you at the station. We all send our best love, and I remain

“Your affectionate aunt,

“LIZZIE FITZ-HEARTY.

“BEECHLAWN, CHILTON, December 7th, 1871.”

This pleasant little note—for my aunt always writes pleasant little notes, and she has a happy knack of packing small hampers of country luxuries when one is leaving—decided me. Certainly there was no place to equal Chilton for the holidays. The rabbit hunting, wild-fowl shooting, and the private theatricals, to add a zest to the long winter evenings. So I wrote and accepted the invitation.

The welcome day came at last. A hurried farewell, and a couple of hours in an express train. A couple of miles on the back of "old Jack," the pony, landed me at Beechlawn, where I found a hearty welcome, and was speedily introduced to a party of some dozen excited and enthusiastic individuals.

"Oh here's the welcome Ronald," said one. "We want you to paint the scenery and make the properties——"

"And to act 'the juvenile walking gentleman,'" said Mrs. Fitz-Hearty.

"Ronald is so clever," interposed my cousin Kate.

"And so good-natured," said cousin Alice.

I bowed, and begged to ask what had been discussed and what decision had been arrived at.

"Oh, didn't you hear that we were going to have some private amateur theatricals for the benefit of the coal-dust fund? And we are going to play—well, I do not know what we are going to play; but we want you to paint the scenery, fit up the stage, arrange the dresses for the gentlemen to play——"

"Stop one moment, my dear Kate." I managed to say. "You are too voluble, and forget that I know nothing of all this."

"How stupid," said Alice, immediately. "We are telling you as fast as we can."

"Rather too fast," I thought; but it did not signify much. I was soon enlightened as to the intention of the meeting, and of the part I was expected to take.

Nature perhaps intended me for an artist. My friends all appreciated my talent for painting, decorating and gilding; but, somehow the fates had some other destiny in store for me. Hence I was fixed on by some kind of natural selection, which perhaps Darwin will explain, to paint the scenery, when my destiny pointed to an active life in a very different direction. Nevertheless, I gladly entered into the spirit of the thing.

"Had they fixed on a piece?" I asked.

"Oh, not exactly," said Alice. "I was thinking of the 'Bride of Lammermoor.'"

"I had suggested 'Othello,' 'Hamlet,' and the 'Bengal Tiger,'" said a tall, stately young man, whom I resolved to hate from that time forward.

"Does no one want to play the inevitable 'Lady of Lyons?'" I inquired; for the "Lady of Lyons" is the stock piece of incipient Thespians.

"The 'Lady of Lyons'" was not *not* thought of. There was not an ambitious Claude nor a proud Pauline amongst the party; and what was still worse, but little experience of stage business, which is so necessary in all theatrical enterprises, and particularly in amateur efforts. One had played a supernumerary character in a farce, and another was great in a charade.

I suggested that our first effort should be confined to one-act vaudevilles and farces, at least for a beginning. So we agreed to play "Mr. and Mrs. White," "Box and Cox," and a charade, which a friend had written to suit the particular talents of the *corps dramatique*.

The first question was the scenery. It is generally the stone on which amateur Thespian clubs stumble. Scenery, under the most favorable circumstances, is a very expensive item. If it is hired, it becomes expensive; If you purchase your own cloth, and engage the nearest scenic artist to paint it, you are generally surprised at the amount if not at the length of the bill. But if one of the company can paint, and does not fear a little splashing, the difficulty soon vanishes. The mere technicalities of scene-painting are soon acquired. With regard to the "effect," a few hints and a little practice soon overcome this obstacle. For the guidance of those who may wish to try their hands on this fascinating art, I will give in the following pages, an outline of the *modus operandi*.



HOW WE MANAGED OUR

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.



CONSTRUCTION OF A STAGE, PROSCENIUM AND AUDITORIUM.

The selection of the place of performance must, of course, depend on local circumstances. For a small theatre, two parlors or drawing-rooms, connected by sliding doors, make a capital theatre. The back room being in most cases smaller than the front one, it can be converted into a stage, with space behind for the changing of the scenes and other stage business; while the doors, when thrown back, leave an opening which forms a very convenient proscenium.

When the stage and auditorium are in one large room, such as a schoolroom or loft, a division can be formed by hanging drapery from the ceiling, which would shut off the portion allotted to the actors from that occupied by the spectators, leaving only an opening for the proscenium and stage.

This may be done by means of a few yards of glazed calico, of a dark color, or carpets may be used temporarily for the purpose.

In the use of the two connecting rooms the advantages are obvious, as not only is the use of drapery dispensed with, but, the room apportioned to the actors having a door of its own, the performers have free ingress and egress, without the cognizance of the audience.

Where there is only one room, a slight partition should be constructed from the stage to the door; a curtain on a rod, or a temporary stage, would do, behind which the performers could pass to and fro, as stage effect is very much marred by the mixing of the actors, in costume, with the audience.

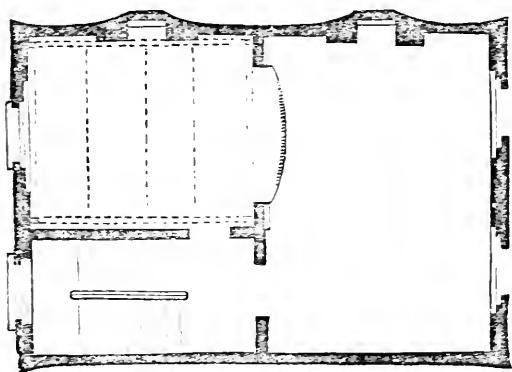


FIG. 1.

We will suppose that the room at the disposal of the artistes is an ordinary modern double drawing-room, divided by an arch or sliding door, and that the back room has been devoted to the use of the stage, and the other apartment for the audience; but this choice much depends upon the general arrangement of the house, taking care that the performers have ready access to dressing and retiring rooms.

As to the construction of the stage itself, the floor must

form its ground-work, for the limited height of ordinary rooms will not admit of a raised platform, to say nothing of the inconvenience and trouble attending such an undertaking. It matters little whether or not the carpet be taken up. We should suggest that if it remain a sheet of green baize be stretched over it, both for the sake of protection and better effect. These preliminaries being settled, we must now proceed to the construction of the frame-work upon which to hang the scenery. It must be borne to mind that these hangings must take three forms—(1) a sheet or flat, for the back scene of all, a space being left behind for convenience sake; (2) vertical strips at the sides to conceal the walls of the room, technically called “wings;” and (3) horizontal strips hung from the top, to hide ceiling and frame-work, the technical name for which is “borders.” A glance at

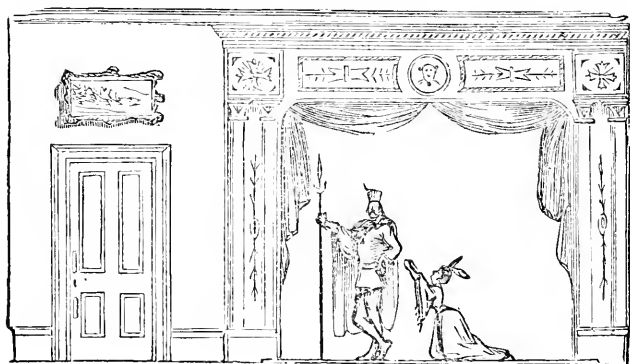


FIG. 2.

Fig. 1 will help the reader to understand this. The single dotted lines represent the laths from which the borders and wings are to be hung; the ends being supported by the frame-work. The space between them should not exceed three feet, but this will depend upon the size of the room.

The frame-work should exactly fit the room, and should consist of four uprights, one at each corner, connected by light beams at the top. If the room be accurately measured in the first instance, the whole of this simple frame-work can be made out of the house, and put together afterwards in half an hour. The joints should all be neatly and strongly made; iron angle-pieces may be used with advantage at all of the corners, for besides giving strength and solidity to the structure, they can be applied by any one who knows the use of a gimlet and screw-driver. The ends of the laths holding the borders, may either be slipped into mortises, previously cut in the beams for that purpose, or be merely screwed on from beneath, after the erection of the frame-work. By this plan they can be easily shifted.

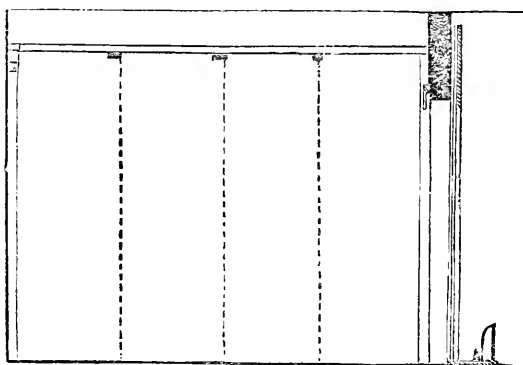


FIG. 3.

The hangings, or "borders," may be made of any stuff that is not glazed. In most houses spare curtains can be mustered; but where this is not the case, green baize will be at once the cheapest and most effective that can be used. Fig. 3 is a section taken through the stage, from front to

back, showing the construction of the frame-work, and the laths from which the borders are to depend. Fig. 4 is also a section through the stage; but from the spectators' point of view, showing the wings and borders already in their places.

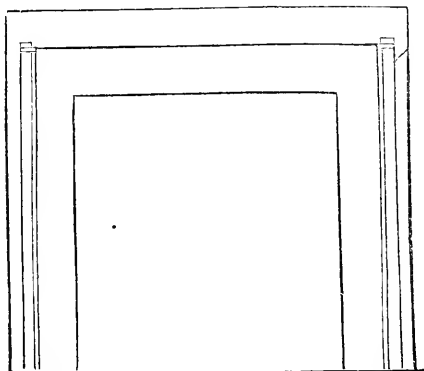


FIG. 4.

THE CURTAIN AND DROP.

Fig. 5 is a section through the stage looking *toward* the audience, and is designed to show the method of raising the curtains.

These should be securely tacked to the beam of the frame-work, immediately over the opening or proscenium, indicated by the dotted lines. The diagonal lines in this drawing represent broad pieces of tape or braid, sewn on to the back of the curtains. Brass rings are to be securely fastened to this braid, at intervals of about one foot, as shown on the plan by large dots; and through these rings, cords are to be passed, having their ends firmly sewn at the point A, and

finally passed over the pulley wheels B and c. It will be at once seen that one cord must be longer than the other, it having to go over both wheels. On pulling these cords, the curtains will separate and rise simultaneously, until they take the form seen in Fig. 2.

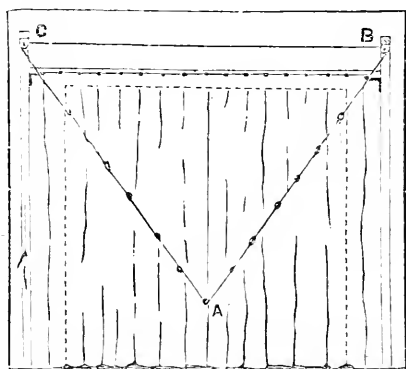


FIG. 5.

Fig. 6 is a detail plan of the pulley wheels to be used; they can be purchased for a small sum at any hardware store. The curtains can be made of any stuff, from baize to damask, provided always that it is not at all transparent.

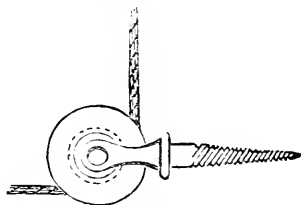


FIG. 6.

As some may wish a drop—in addition to the curtain, we will give instructions for that also. It is constructed on the same principle as an ordinary window-shade—that is, simply

drawn up by means of the cord and pully. But as the roller on which it acts is larger than that in ordinary use for windows, it would be as well to have double cords, one at each end, worked simultaneously, so that the drop may rise evenly. It should be brought up slowly on the ringing of the bell. The drop usually is ornamented with a picture, either a landscape or an allegorical subject. The manner of preparing and painting this will be described under the head of scenery and scene-painting.

There ought to be a distance of six or eight inches between the curtain and drop, so as to prevent a collision.

LIGHTING THE STAGE.

Next comes the all important question of lighting the stage. Where gas is in the house this is a comparatively easy matter. The lights should be equally distributed over the whole room, otherwise disagreeable shadows will be thrown in the scenes, which will in a great measure destroy the effect. Should there be a chandelier in the room, it must be taken down before the frame-work is erected, and the nozzle that is left protruding from the ceiling will serve as the supply pipe for the footlights we are now about to describe. Procure a length of iron pipe of one inch in diameter, perforated at distances of about nine inches, to receive ordinary gas-burners. Fix this securely to a board of the same length, so that it will stand on the floor, with the burners pointing upwards. Next construct the reflectors, which may be made separately, one for each burner, as in Fig. 7, or in one length, by nailing a slip of bright tin to a

nine-inch board, the back of which will face the audience, and must therefore be painted. The connection with the



FIG. 7.

gas supply can be made with little difficulty, but we should recommend the employment of a gas-fitter here, to avoid the chance of a mishap of any kind. Good paraffine candles will make very efficient sidelights, and can be placed in temporary brackets against the walls, and between the wings; they should in all cases have reflectors placed behind them. Where gas is not available, paraffine candles must be used as footlights, and protected by glasses to prevent guttering. A strong wire must be stretched across the proscenium, to prevent the performers' dresses being brought into contact with the lights.

Where it is necessary to throw a colored glare over the stage, as in the case of moonlight, or the red glow of sunset, a transparent medium must be used in connection with the footlights. This is best constructed as follows:—Take a piece of wood of the same length as the footlight board, and which may be two and a half inches in width, and one inch in thickness; screw a piece of the same substance, and about nine inches long, on each end, three pieces must be screwed in at right angles to the original piece, as if a frame were about to be made. From the extremities of the short posts thus formed, stretch a fine wire, having its ends firmly fastened to either post. Then fill in the whole with thin silk of the color required to produce the necessary effect. This

frame can be hinged to the footlight board, as in Fig. 8, and can be raised or lowered in front of the light by means of a string.

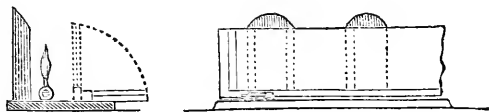


FIG. 8.

The relative positions of curtains, footlights, frame-work, etc., can be readily understood by reference to the ground plan (Fig. 1), remembering always that it must be modified to meet the arrangements of the particular room to be provided for. The most effective way of lighting a stage is by means of border-lights, but this is almost impracticable in a parlor if only on account of the great heat that would be involved, to say nothing of the detriment to the ceiling. Care should be observed to keep the light in the auditorium subdued, so as to give greater brilliancy to that on the stage.

SCENERY AND SCENE-PAINTING.

As the stage machinery, except under very unusual circumstances, would be unattainable, or, at least, unmanageable, in a domestic theatre, the plan adopted in many of the smaller theatres of using drop-scenes instead of flats, is the most available for most purposes in amateur theatricals. These occupy but little space when not in use, as they can be rolled up and put away, and when in use are easily worked. They can be used to most advantage in skies and back-

scenes. Drop-scenes are worked in the same manner as the drop.

For side-scenes—that is to say, those that project from the wings at each side of the stage—a very simple mode of construction will suffice. These scenes need not project more than a couple of feet beyond the wings. They can be made as follows :—

An oblong frame is made by joining four pieces of lath, and fastening them at the corners with tacks. On this frame either stout paper or common calico may be stretched. If the former is used, the best adapted for the purpose is in rolls, or what is called endless paper, because it can be cut to any length. It should be of a stout quality. This being cut to the proper size—that is, an inch larger than the frame every way—it is laid on the table, and damped with a sponge and water, and while still damp it is placed on the frame, when the edges are turned over and covered with strong paste to about the depth of two inches. They are then turned back again over the frame, and carefully pasted on it. The paper will, while damp, appear loose, but when dry will become perfectly tight and flat.

The advantage of having side-scenes constructed in this manner is, that, being light, they are readily lifted in and out of their places.

As some objects, such as a tree, part of a cottage, flower-beds, etc., would require to be cut out to their proper shapes, the best way to manage it will be to draw the outline with white chalk on a large sheet of millboard, and then, before painting it, cut it round with the point of the blade of a strong pocket knife. This is rather a troublesome process, but the old proverb, “*Nil sine labore,*” must be borne in mind.

Should calico be preferred, it will be only necessary to fasten it with tacks to the frame. It should be drawn as tight as possible, so as to lie without a wrinkle. This is best effected by pulling the calico with a pincers, and while it is still in the grip of that instrument, making a hole with a bradawl, and hammering in a tack.

The calico for the drop-scenes had best be prepared and painted on before it is fastened on to the roller.

Paper will not require any preparation before being painted on, and calico only requires a couple of primings, or washing over of whiting mixed with thin size.

Having prepared the drops and side-scenes as far as the mechanical part is concerned, the next operation will be to proceed to paint them.

In this department the artist will be at no loss for an ample choice of subjects, as he will find in the numerous illustrated periodicals and books ample material on which to exercise his skill. Landscape, marine, interiors of every variety, will be ready to his hand.

As amateurs generally fail in attempting too much for small parlor performances, we give illustrations of scenes we used, (plates 1 and 2); these scenes or "cloths," as they are technically termed, are all that are absolutely necessary if sufficient drapery can be obtained to form a proscenium and drop-curtain to separate the audience from the actors. These three scenes consist of a wood-side scene, with a park and park-like scenery; on the right hand (fig. 1), a handsome drawing-room, showing a window, (fig. 2), and a kitchen, (fig. 3), at the back of the kitchen a garden scene, showing distant hills, (fig. 4), may be painted; at the back of the drawing room a street, (fig. 5), and at the back of the landscape, a

corridor or hall so designed as to answer at a pinch for a bed-



PLATE 1.

chamber, (fig. 6), if necessary. These scenes, if intended for use in a parlor or small apartment only, "cloths" ten

feet square will be found large enough. In making these

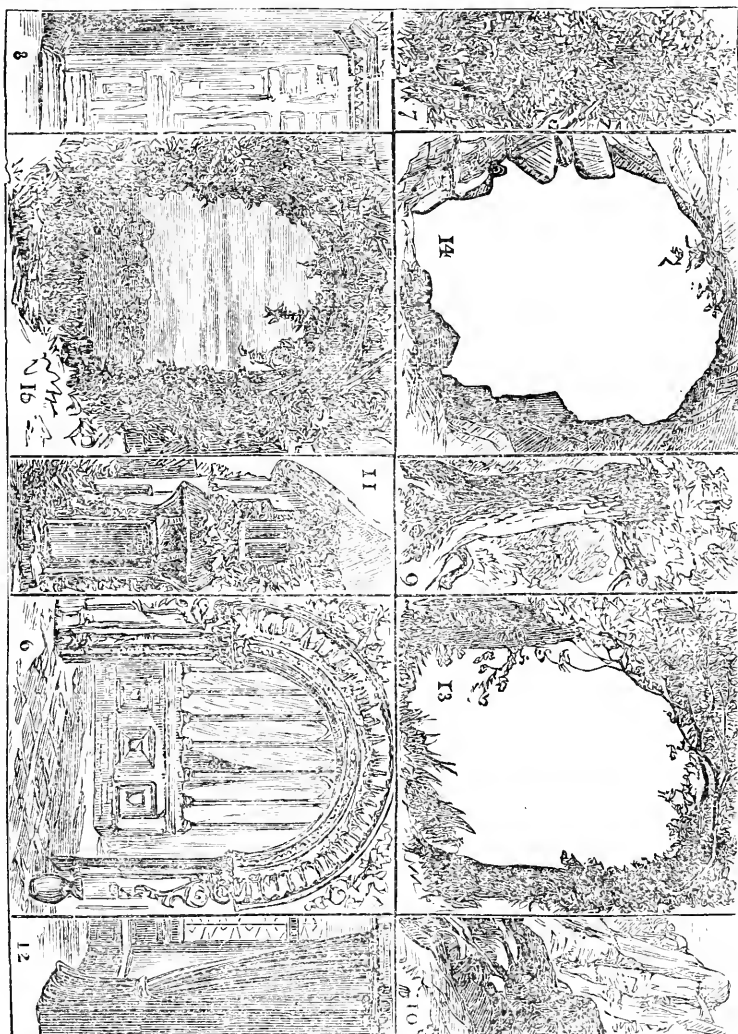


PLATE 2.

“cloths,” the scenes should run horizontally and not vertically, in order that they may run smoothly. The wings

and slips necessary to give a finish to these, are revolving wings, painted on one side with foliage (fig. 7), on the other with panel stone work (fig. 8). In handsome rooms these may be varied by a colored curtain or other piece of drapery. A separate wing representing a trunk of an old tree (fig. 9), on one side, and on the other some rock work (fig. 10), will be very useful either for a wing or foreground. A side cottage with practical door and window (fig. 11), painted on the reverse side for the interior of the dwelling (fig. 12), are also necessary. These altogether, will make six wings if necessary. The *mise en scene* may be made more perfect by introducing in the front two open cut scenes, which, for their width, will act as wings and sky borders or flies (fig. 13), for foliage, can be reversed, as (fig. 14); and thus by a little trouble, the scenes may be varied *ad infinitum*. If the number of rollers should be increased to five, one should be painted as an utility scene, with a moonlight effect on one side, and a sunset and distant country on the other (figs. 15 and 16). These scenes, if carefully painted, can be used with lights or without them. Thus, combined with others, they give a reality to all. The moonlight effect can be used for distant mountains, lake or seashore. The cloth should be sufficiently long to admit of the horizon being altered in height, by rolling a portion of the canvas on the roller or upper bar. We painted our scene with an admixture of green and purple hues, using a considerable quantity of emerald green in the sky and water, and using, sparingly, our Prussian blue for the darker and purple tints for the hills and foliage, as shown in fig. 15. We then cut out the moon and glued a piece of yellow silk over the orifice. The reflection of the moon on the water can either

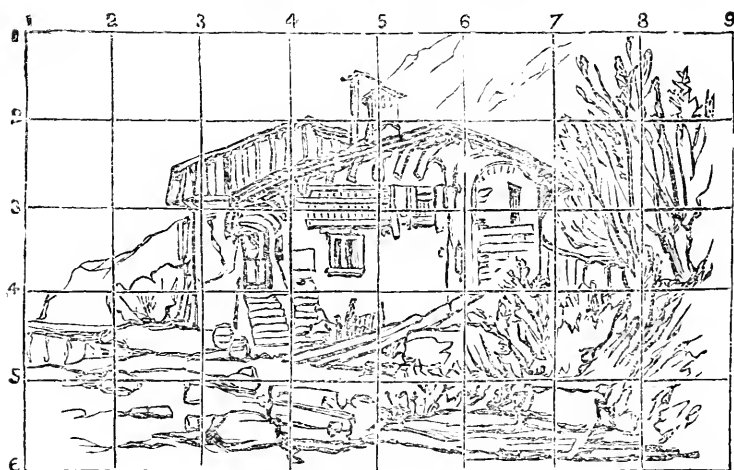
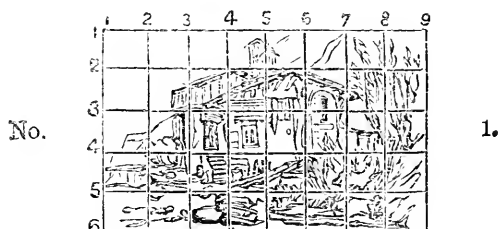
be painted in and a little glass frost added for brilliancy, or the light may be cut out of the canvas and the parts covered with light silk; the moving waters are thus shown by a fixed light behind the moon, and a moving light behind the waters. This scene can be used for all moonlight effects, varying the "sets" in front to suit the occasion.

Having chosen a subject, it can be enlarged to any size by the following simple process:—Divide it into an arbitrary number of squares, both horizontally and perpendicularly, and number each square both ways. That done, square out on a sheet of brown paper cut to the required size the same number of squares, numbered in the same way as those on the pattern to be copied. Then draw within each square as much of the subject as it encloses. The diagrams on next page will assist in making the instructions more easily comprehended.

We shall now explain what is to be done with this outline when finished.

The surface to be covered having been prepared, place the enclosed outline on brown paper, and with soft chalk, scraped fine, cover the back of it by means of a piece of woolen rag. The chalk may be either black or red. Then fasten it down at the top corners with drawing pins or tacks; and having securely done so, go carefully over the drawing with a hard pencil or an ivory point, until the whole has left a solid tracing on the scene to which it is to be transferred. The brown paper may then be removed. It is unnecessary to say that the squares are not to be included in the tracing.

It may now be gone over with black chalk, so as to correct anything that may be desired, as well as to render the outline less liable to obliteration in the course of painting.



The colors used for scene-painting may be mixed in large saucers, or for any part where a large surface is to be covered, in small basins or bowls. Thin size is the vehicle with which they are worked. The size, however, must be very weak, or it will coagulate when cold. Every color must also have an admixture of whiting to render it opaque; scenes being always painted in what is technically called body color, or *tempera*, the latter word being mostly corrupted into distemper. In some of the very dark finishing touches, however, the whites may be omitted.

The colors are laid on with hog-hair brushes, the same as those used in oil-painting. The middle or half-tints are first laid in, and over them are worked the different degrees of lights and depths.

It should be borne in mind that the cheapest and commonest colors will answer as well as the most expensive for scene-painting. They can be procured at any paint store, in powder or lump, but will require grinding before they are mixed. This is done with water only, by means of a slab and muller. When being mixed for use, a little thin size is added.

The following are those most generally in use :—

✓ Whiting.	Rose pink.
Yellow ochre.	Wet blue.
✓ Chrome yellow.	✓ French ultramarine.
✓ Orange chrome.	✓ Brunswick green.
Orange lead.	✓ Burnt umber.
Venetian red.	Lampblack.

To this list of colors may be added Dutch metal, yellow, white and green, with tinfoil of different colors.

Any number of shades may be made from the foregoing list of colors, by judicious mixing. It must be remembered that in tempera-painting the colors dry in much lighter than when they are first put on. A little experience, however, will enable the artist to make allowance for this.

FOR SKIES, the azure or unclouded portion is laid in with wet blue, mixed with white; if it is terminated below by a horizon, the latter may, if a mild one, be made of yellow ochre and white; if a warm one, chrome yellow is added. When the sky and horizon are laid in, which must be done rapidly, they are softened into each other while

damp. White clouds on the azure sky should be treated in the same manner, or they will look hard. Dark clouds are made with blue, Venetian red, and rose pink, with a little yellow ochre added. In a brilliant sunset the clouds may be of a sharp purple, and intermixed with streaks of orange lead on a warm yellow.

FOREGROUND TREES should have the middle tints laid in with Brunswick green; the lights are then put in, in their several degrees, by adding chrome yellow to the green, until the highest lights are reached, when chrome yellow alone may be used. The trunk and branches may be put in with burnt umber, and the lights touched in with the same mixed with white, the dark parts with burnt umber and black. A little brightening up in the shades may be given by a warm color composed of lampblack, Venetian red and rose pink. In touching in the foliage, care should be taken not to *block* it in too solid, as the light should appear to play through it.

DISTANT TREES, FIELDS, etc., should have added to the Brunswick green, for the middle tints, white; the same with the chrome yellow in the higher parts. In distant objects there must be no dark or positive color, lest they should come too much forward.

SLOPING BANKS may be treated, as regards color, in the same manner as trees.

MOUNTAINS are generally painted purple interspersed with green.

RIVERS AND LAKES may be treated with the same colors as skies, but the lights should be sharper and more positive.

GARDENS, PARTERRES, etc., may be painted as fancy dictates. The same may be said of interiors.

Dutch metal is a material which, if used sparingly, gives great brilliancy to interiors. It should not be laid on in solid masses, but lightly touched on the prominent parts of the mouldings of walls, the ornamental portions of pillars, picture-frames, etc.

The manner of applying it is as follows :—Paint in with gold size the touches intended to represent gold; and when they are nearly dry, press a leaf of Dutch metal firmly on to them, taking care that it lies quite smooth. When dry, with an old silk handkerchief brush off the superfluous metal, and the touches will come out as intended.

COSTUME.

Costume is the observance of propriety in regard to the person or thing represented, so that the scene of action, the habits, arms, proportions, etc., are properly imitated. The peculiarities of form, physiognomy, complexion, dress, ornaments, etc., should be all conformable to the period and country in which the scene is laid. The rules of costume would be violated by the introduction of one or more figures arrayed in the scanty raiment of the Hindoos into a scene in Siberia; by the representation of American Indians in turbans and top boots; or by Romans dressed in tail coats and peg-tops, serving cannon at the siege of Carthage; or by a Chinaman in a scarlet hunting-cap sitting on the back of a horse, eating veal and ham pie by the aid of chop-sticks.

To produce a showy effect at a small expense can be readily managed by persons of a suggestive mind and quick invention. Cast-aside garments of silk or velvet can,

by the aid of spangles, fringe and bugles, be made to look really well by a stage light. Discarded furs, too, come in with great effect. Armor can be constructed of thin paste-board, covered with tinfoil, and may in some parts be studded with Dutch metal. Helmets and crowns can be made of the same materials; and for ladies and Oriental grandees, strings of cheap beads, and mock pearls will look quite gorgeous. Glazed calico can be brought to bear very successfully as an imitation of satin. We have seen long hair remarkably well represented by skeins of thread, and beards by tufts of tow. For a grey beard the tow does *au naturel*, and for any other color it can be dyed. There are many other contrivances which will suggest themselves to the mind of the young amateur, aided, as he will be, by a knowledge of his own resources.

PROPERTIES AND ACCESSORIES

Would include a vast number of articles used on the stage, and are independent of either scenery or costume. Under this head, might be included arms, such as swords, pistols, guns and spears. Banners and standards, agricultural and gardening implements, furniture and domestic utensils, from the imperial throne of the palace, to the churn and grindstone of the cottage; and, in fact, too many things to render an account of.

In a regular theatre, these are prepared under the superintendence of the property manager, and placed in his charge.

Most of these articles can be made, at little cost, to look very well. Swords and spears may be made of wood

covered with tin-foil, and shields can be made very effectively of mill-board, and either covered with tinfoil, and studded with bosses of Dutch metal, or they can be highly elaborated with coats of arms and other emblematic devices. Straight, smooth broom-handles can, by means of a little color rubbed on them, and some ornamental work in Dutch metal, be made into very presentable spear-shafts and supports for banners. They would also make supports for canopies. Banners are prepared in the same manner as drop-scenes; they should be richly emblazoned with armorial bearings. Gold fringe, with which they ought to be edged, can be had for little money at the theatrical costumers. A variety of imitation gold papers, plain and embossed, can be procured at any fancy stationer's. Some of these ornaments are made in the form of leaves, both in gold, silver, and green foil; these last can be worked very advantageously in wreaths, etc.

Domestic and gardening utensils, kitchen utensils, and general furniture can be mostly supplied by the house. Thrones, footstools, and many other things that look very grand indeed on the stage, may be improvised by having a gold-fringed drapery thrown over them.

STAGE EFFECTS.

Stage effects may be made very telling, and yet be produced by very simple means. A terrific lightning storm is to be produced. To do so the lights are to be lowered, and there is heard a pattering of rain. The effect of rain is imitated by having brown paper stretched tightly on a frame; it must be as tight as a drum. This is obtained by wet-

ting before stretching. It is placed at the back of the stage, out of sight, and against it is thrown judiciously, but sharply, some hard peas. It is as well to have some in both hands, so as to keep up the shower continuously. This seems an easy thing to do, but a deal of artistic skill may be shown in producing a good imitation.

Then we have a flash of lightning; remember that the lightning comes before the thunder. A little gunpowder—very little—mixed with sulphur, so as to give it a blue tinge, may be carried on a small shovel; a pinch of this thrown through the flame of a candle will give a flash; or place a little lycopodium in a narrow glass tube, and blow gently through the tube, so as to project the lycopodium through the flame of a candle and it will make a long flash like lightning. The flash will be followed immediately by thunder: to give this, nothing is required but a long piece of tin, which, if shaken pretty hard, will give the effect.

Now the wind rises; this must be gradual. A long narrow piece of tin this time, whisked like a harlequin's sword; then as the wind increases a natural effect is given by blowing softly through a penny whistle. Thus the storm is complete, but the figures on the stage must act in accordance with it. Should it come into the scene that a ship at sea is firing signal guns of distress, a tap on a large drum will exactly produce the required sound.

A calm and beautiful night is the effect desired. This is produced by having a clear and cloudless sky painted on a drop-scene at the back of the stage, and also on the short sky drop suspended in front. The short drop may be left as it is, but the large one at the back must have either a round hole or a crescent cut in it to represent the moon, and also a

number of small ones to indicate the stars. Behind these should be pasted oiled tissue paper, because if left open they will look simply like holes. To show them up, the space behind the stage should be well lighted up, and the stage itself kept in subdued light. A few objects cut out in millboard, and having a strong moonlight effect painted on them, studded here and there, will heighten the illusion. Do not, however, fall into the error of placing them in such a position that the bright lights will come at the wrong side.

A conflagration is represented by having the windows of a scene of a house or houses pierced, and lights flashed behind them, while lurid fire is burned on an iron shovel at the wings, illuminating the scene at intervals; these two, —the lights behind and the colored fire at the wings—will be sufficient of the fiery element. Then, behind the scene, boards should be knocked about to give the idea of falling timbers. Figures crowding on the stage, shouting and calling, will heighten the effect. If a piece of hose is convenient, one end of it can be drawn on the stage. Colored fire can be had from the publishers of this book.

A hayfield makes a pretty scene, and one easily represented. A few piles of clothes, or anything that will form a resemblance to small haystacks, can be placed at intervals on the stage. These will then, as well as the entire stage, have a little hay scattered over them. This the figures on the stage will rake, and toss, and make believe to make hay. Care must be taken not to allow the hay to come too near the footlights.

A sea. To give the effect of a sea it is only necessary to spread a piece of sea-green gauze or thin muslin over

the stage; this is tossed and agitated by persons at the wings introducing long poles underneath, and imitating the movement of the waves. The scenery, of course, must be appropriate.

Snow is imitated by paper being torn into very small atoms, and scattered from above on the stage.

THE STAGE MANAGER.

The stage manager stands in the same relation to the actors that a drill instructor does to a company of soldiers, and unless the most implicit obedience is exacted by him, a successful result is simply impossible. Being elected by the choice of the troupe, his will must be law, and no dispute can be permitted as to his "cast" of the parts, or the manner in which he thinks it best they should be carried out.

The stage manager need not of necessity be one of the performers; but he must be a person of taste and judgment. His duties are as follows: when a piece is chosen for representation, he reads the play to the assembled company, giving due expression to the several characters, laying emphasis on such parts as he wishes to draw their attention especially to. Each performer then receives his *role*, and a first rehearsal is called for a particular day. When the time specified arrives, the actors essay their parts, and are corrected by him as to either the reading or the action, if it should appear to him that such a course would be required. He afterwards puts his team through further rehearsals, and winds up with a dress rehearsal, when he ascertains that every one is perfect; and here, to a certain extent, his duties terminate.

THE PROMPTER.

The duties of the prompter are simple enough; he has only to remain at the right wing, book in hand, and carefully follow the actors as they go through their parts. Should he observe any hesitation on the part of any of them, he in a low voice prompts them; but he must be careful not to speak in a manner that will be heard in the front of the house.

THE ORCHESTRA.

The orchestra may consist of as many or as few instruments as the strength of the company will be enabled to command. A pianoforte, or even a concertina, will, in fact, be sufficient for a domestic performance. As it would in many instances interfere with the view of the stage if the musicians were seated in front of the footlights, the best arrangement is to have them at one or both sides of the proscenium, on the side of the auditorium. In this way they would not interfere with any one.

Should the performance take place in a room, such as a lecture-hall or schoolroom, where there is a raised platform, the musicians can be placed in the usual manner. On receiving a secret sign from one of the actors, who may require extra prompting, the orchestra will strike up a voluntary, or what in theatrical language is called a hurry, so that there may not be a break in the performance.

THE PERFORMERS.

A thorough appreciation of the part to be enacted, and of its connection with the performance as a whole, on the part of each performer, is the first essential leading to success. The representative of a minor character must not, through a feeling of vanity, obtrude himself on the audience more than his part warrants him in doing. Care in committing the part to memory is a matter also of the first importance; it is a duty incumbent on every actor, from the hero to the servant who delivers a message. A mute appeal for assistance from the prompter, if made too frequently, will soon be noticed by the spectators, with whom it does not elevate the status of the actor. A performer must not leave his post while waiting his turn on the stage; great confusion arises from the fact of having to run all over the house in search of an actor at the last moment.

The rules to be followed by an actor in the execution of his part were never so clearly expressed as by the immortal Shakespeare, when through Hamlet (Act iii., Scene ii.) he sets before the players the qualities of stage representation.

“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a rumbustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags,

to split the ears of groundlings ; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-show and noise : I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant : it out-Herods Herod : pray you avoid it.

* * * * * *

“Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature ; for anything so overdone is for the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, to scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of which one must, in your allowance, o’erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely,—that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan or man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature’s journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

* * * * * *

“And let those who speak your clowns speak no more than is set down for them : for there will be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that’s villainous, and shows most pitiful in the fool that uses it.”

Hamlet, Act iii., Scene ii.

DRAMATIC AUTHORS.

As it frequently occurs that a company desires to perform pieces of its own creation, a few observations on the construction of a drama will be of advantage to youthful authors.

Before entering on his task, the dramatist should carefully study the specialties of the company for whom he is about to write. Many excellent compositions have been rejected by managers because the parts did not fit the company, while plays possessing but little intrinsic merit have met with an unqualified success, in consequence of their bringing out in force the respective talents of the actors engaged in their performance.

Another mistake young authors are apt to fall into is commencing a play without having any fixed plan as to the manner in which it is to be carried out. That is a fatal error. Before setting down a line of dialogue, the plot should be sketched out, and the characters roughly moulded. Striking situations and telling scenes should be conjured up in the imagination; and when all this is done, the regular construction of the piece may be entered upon.

HOW TO MAKE A CALCIUM LIGHT.

In order to exhibit this beautiful light with an apparatus of one's own construction, it is necessary first of all, to provide a square pine box 18 in. long, by 17 in. high; blacken

the inside of it with lamp-black and size; then affix to the top of the box a tin top similar to that of a magic-lantern, to act as the chimney, and carry off the heat.

In the center of the bottom of the box cut a small hole, sufficiently large to admit the blow-pipe, and one inch and a half behind this small hole, bore a smaller one with a gimlet, which is intended for the spindle to go through that holds the lime.

Now cut a round hole, 7 in. in diameter, in the centre of the front of the box, and here there should be a sliding panel in a groove, so as to open and shut on the light at will; for the lenses are placed at this hole.

Provide yourself with three plano-convex lenses, white, green and red, similar to those used for signals on the railways—these are employed to produce the various colored effects suggested by the scenic artist, and each lense should be fixed in a small frame.

Pass the spindle through the little hole made with the gimlet, then drop on to it the cylinder of lime. Through the other hole in the bottom of the box, pass the blow-pipe, so that when fixed the point of the blow-pipe shall be opposite the centre of the lime, and so close to it as to admit a five-cent piece to pass freely between the lime and the point of the blow-pipe.

We may here explain that the blow-pipe stuffing-box (in which the gasses mix), and the brass tubing attached to it, with a stop-cock to each end of the tubing, are sold all in one piece.

Vulcanized India-rubber tubing, of any length, half an inch in diameter, must now be attached to each of these

stop-cocks, and at each other end of the India-rubber tubing must be attached a gas bag.

Having filled one bag with oxygen gas, and the other with hydrogen gas, it is desirable first to turn on the hydrogen, and light it so as to warm the lime, then gradually turn on the oxygen, and the brilliant light is produced. The colors are varied by changing the lenses before the front of the box.

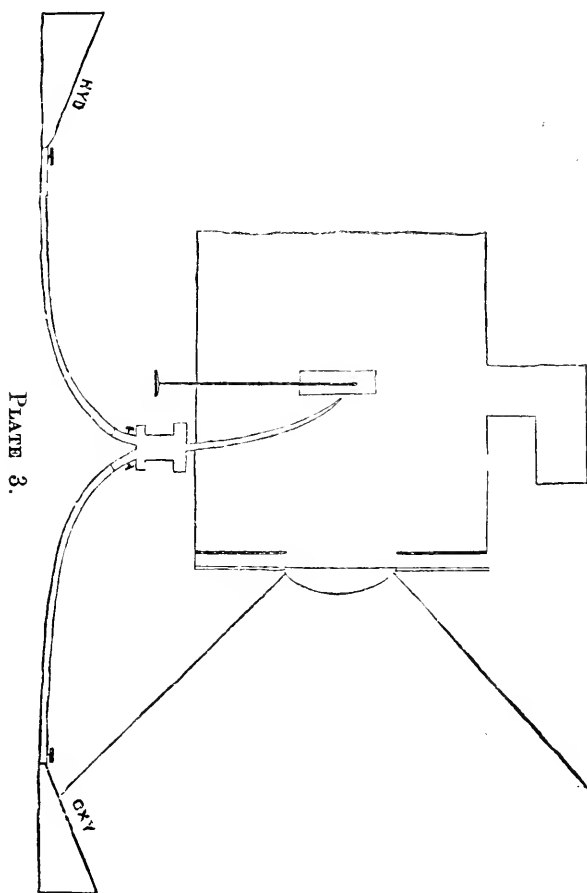
You must occasionally turn the spindle round that holds the lime.

In the diagram below we have taken out one side of the box to show the arrangement of the interior, which will enable our readers to fully understand the description of it on the next page.

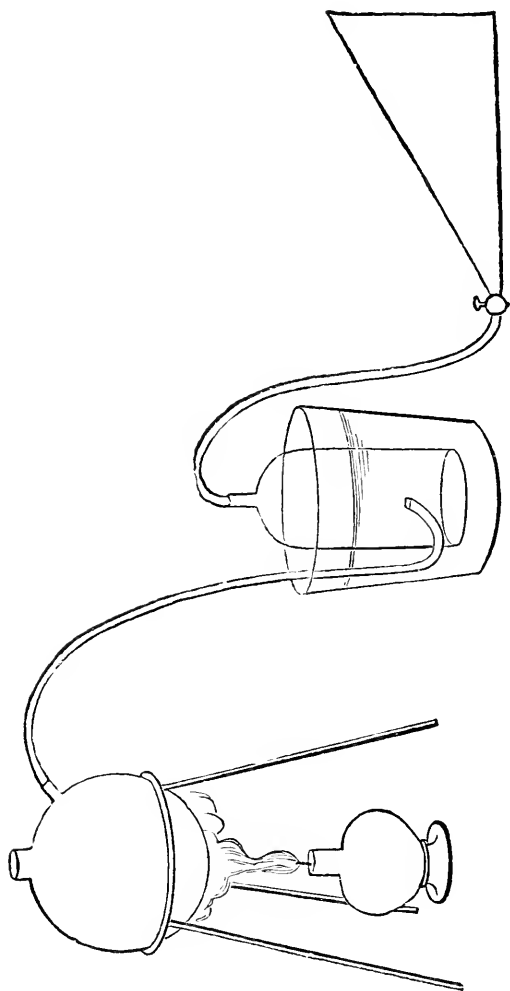
Now to manufacture the gases. Procure a retort, the globe part of which must be made of copper, and 4 in. diameter, with a screw to open at the top for putting in the ingredients; a little below the top (at the side) a short piece of copper tubing, about 2 in. in length, should be brazed in, and to this affix with a union joint about 5 feet of patent gas piping, turned up at the extreme end, which end place in the pail of water and into the little bee hole under the purifier.

Take a common pail, three parts filled with water, into which place the purifier—this purifier is made of tin, somewhat in the form of a bee-hive, hollow, no bottom, a small opening in the top, and another small opening at the side, just where the bees would go in. Into the opening at the top is a brass neck and union-joint attached, into which affix a piece of flexible tubing 3 or 4 feet in length, the other end of which attach to your oxygen gas bag.

Unscrew the top of the retort, and place in it $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of chlorate of potash, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of powdered manganese, which



must first be well mixed together, then screw on the top again. Place a spirit lamp with a good flame under the



retort, the gas will soon commence to give off—take care that the stop-cock of your gas bag is turned the proper way for the gas to enter the bag. The following diagram illustrates the process.

The hydrogen gas you can procure in this way: affix the India-rubber flexible tubing to the female joint of any gas burner—taking care that all the air is first expelled from the pipe—and your hydrogen bag will soon be filled.

In order to force the gases out of your bags to produce a brilliant light, have two boards lightly constructed, in a wedge shape with hinges; you will require two sets of these, one for each bag. Place them between; it will be necessary to have holes made in the boards beveled, to allow the stop-cocks to come through.

Now place weights either of shot or bags of sand upon the boards to produce the pressure; an equal weight should be placed on each bag.

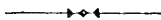
We may just remind you that after making the oxygen gas, you should immediately wash out your retort, and dry it well before again using.

You will find it convenient, in exhibiting the light, to place the apparatus (Plate 3), on a frame with four legs. An old worn-out cane-bottomed chair makes an excellent stand.

PENELOPE ANNE;

An entirely New and Original Musical Farce,

BY F. C. BURNAND.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON JOSE JOHN BOXOS DE CABALLEROS Y CARVALHOS Y REGALIAS, OF
SALAMANCA ; *generally known and without familiarity mentioned as*
“JOHN BOX.”

COUNT CORNELIUS DE COXO, Land Margrave, of somewhere, *with a*
Palazzo in Venice ; commonly known as “JAMES COX.”

KARL, *the German waiter*

MRS. PENELOPE ANNE KNOX.

MAJOR GENERAL BOUNCER, B. L. H.



*The Scene is laid in Aix-la-Chapelle, at the Hotel known as Die
Schweine und die Pfeiffer. Time—late in Autumn.*



PENELOPE ANNE.

The SCENE represents a public room in the small hotel before mentioned, at Aix-la-Chapelle. Doors R. H., and L. H. also a door C. leading to a garden. A table, with various books, papers, etc., on it. Four chairs, etc.

Enter COX, C.

COX [*He is in full tourist style of the most recent fashion. Over this he wears a top-coat and round his throat a cache-nez. In one hand he holds a large glass of water. He walks up and down on entering. Drinks a little. Takes off his coat, which he throws on the sofa. Then drinks again. Then walks. Then removes the cache-nez, which he throws on to coat, then he stands still and respire freely.*] Phew! I'm only gradually cooling. This is the sixth day I've taken the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle—and I'm beginning to be so sulphurous all over, that, if anybody was to rub against me suddenly, I should ignite and go off with a bang. I've written to my friend Box an account of it. I haven't seen Box for some years; but as I particularly wish him to remain in England just now, I've commenced a correspondence with him. I've told him that the doctor's orders here are very simple—"Herr Cox," says he to me—Herr's German—I must explain that to Box, because, though Box is a good fellow, yet—he's—in fact—he's an ass. "Herr Cox," says he, "you must drink a glass of sulphur wasser." Was-

ser's German too ; it didn't take long for my naturally fine intellect to discover that it meant water. But Box doesn't know it—for though he's an excellent fellow, he is—in fact he's an ignoramus, "Herr Cox," says he to me, "you must take the sulphur wasser. and then walk about." "What next, Herr Doctor?" says I. Note to Box. *Herr Doctor* doesn't mean that he's anything to do with a *Hair-cutter*. No, it's the respectful German for Mister—must explain that to Box, for though he's a tiptop chap, yet Box is—is in fact, Box is a confounded idiot. "Herr Doctor," says I, "what next?" "Well," says he, "when you've taken the sulphur water and walked about, then you must walk about and take the sulphur water." Simple. The first glass—ugh! I shan't forget it. I never could have imagined, till that moment, what the taste of a summer beverage made of curious old eggs—a trifle over ripe—beaten up with a lucifer match, would be like—now I know. But I was not to be conquered. Glass number two was not so bad. Glass number three—less unpalatable than glass number two—glass number four—um, between number three and number four a considerable time was allowed to elapse, as I found I had been going it too fast. But now my enfeebled health is gradually being renovated, and they tell me when I leave this, I shall be "quite another man." I don't know what other man I shall be. Yes I do. I am now a single man. I hope to leave here a double, I mean a married man. Cox, my boy, that's what you've come here for. Cox, my boy, that's why you want to keep, diplomatically, Box, my boy, in England, and in ignorance of your proceedings. Herr Cox, you're a sly dog. If I could give myself a dig in the ribs without any internal injury, I'd do it. I came here for the rheumatism. By the way I needn't have come here for *that*, as I'd got it pretty strongly. I caught it, without any sort of trouble. I bathed at Margate, in the rain. Before I could reach my bathing machine, I was drenched through and through, I don't know where to, but long beyond the skin. The injury was more than skin deep. No amount of exterior scrubblings could cure me. Brandies and waters hot internally, every day for two months, produced more than the desired effect. I began to wander. I finished by traveling. And here I am. In six more lessons on the sulphur spring, I shall be quite the Cure. [*Dances and sings.*] "The Cure, the Cure, the Cure, &c."

Enter WAITER, C.

Waiter [*Putting newspaper on table.*] Aachen Zeitung, Herr Cox.

Cox Nein danky, I mean, no thank you. Nix—nein—don't want any.

Waiter Nein, Herr Cox, zis ees de baber—de daily baber at Aix Beebels come. [*Exit c.*]

Cox Ja. Goot. I flatter myself I'm getting on with my German. Here's the arival column—English—I look at this every day—because—um [*Reading it.*]—"Mr. and Mrs. Bloater, from Yarmouth, and all the little Bloaters—Major Bouncer"—goodness gracious! how extraordinary!—Major Bouncer—Oh it can't be the same, it must be one of his ancestors—or his posterity—"Major Bouncer of the Royal Banbury Light Horse"—pooh! fancy Bouncer on a light horse!

Ride a cock horse
To Banbury gorse
To see Major Bouncer
Upon a light horse;
Rings on his fingers—

Stop a minute—Rings—Ah! [*Reads*] "accompanied by Mrs. Bouncer, also of the Banbury Light Horse." Of course, that settles it. It is *not* old Bouncer. Next, "Mr. and Mrs. Winkle, from Pinner." Ah! at last—"Arrived at the Hotel der Schwein und die Pfeife," that's here—"Mrs. Penelope Ann Knox." I only heard it the other day at Margate. There she sat. Radiant as ever. A widow for the second time. Originally widow of William Wiggins of Margate and Ramsgate, and now widow of Nathaniel Knox, of the Docks, with a heap—a perfect heap of money. Then my old passion returned. I determined to propose to her. I was about to do so, when on the very morning that I was going to throw myself at her feet, I caught this infernal rheumatism, which laid me on my back. When I recovered she was gone. "Where to?" says I. "Aix!" says they. My spirits mounted. I took a vast amount of pains to get to Aix, and here I am. I had heard of some property in Venice, which belonged to the Coxes some hundreds of years ago, and so I thought I'd join pleasure with business, and take Aix, and Penelope Anne on

the road. And now *here* she is. If Box had only known it, he'd have been after her. He's a first-rate fellow, is Box, but abominably mercenary and mean. He'd think nothing of proposing to Penelope Anne merely for her money. And *I* think nothing of a man who could do such a thing. So I've written to Box telling him to go to the North, and I'll come and stay with him for the shooting season. A little shooting Box in Scotland. Ha! ha! when I *do* go, it will be with Penelope Anne on my arm, as Mr. and Mrs. Cox. Let me see, when the hour strikes again, it will be time for my third tumbler—here it is—and the promenade. The Doctor says I must be punctual in drinking the water, so I'll put myself straight, and then, so to speak, lay myself out for the capture of Penelope Anne.

SONG.

[“*Les Pompiers de Nanterre.*”]

I'm so very glad,
 Feel so very jolly,
 Like a little lad
 Who has come home to play.
 Now about I'll gad!
 Widow melancholy!
 She will be delighted
 When I my addresses pay.
 Tzing la la la! Tzing la la la!
 I'm an artful dodger!
 Tzing la la la! Tzing la la la!
 Hey! for Victory!

[*Exit R. H.*

Enter WAITER C., with portmanteau, followed by BOX as if from a long journey ; he is wrapped up to the eyes, and above them. WAITER points to room L. H. BOX inclines his head. Exit WAITER, C. BOX commences unbuttoning long foreign overcoat with hood. Then takes off hood, then takes off immense wrapper. When free of these he appears dressed in very foreign fashion.

Re-enter WAITER, C.

Waiter [*Puzzled.*] 'Ave you zeen a Herr mit ein long code,—long tail?

Box A what? A hare with a long tail?

Waiter Ah! ah! [*Laughing.*] You are him, I zee.

[*Pointing to com.* Dat vas you dere. Zo its goot.

Box Oh, I see. Yes, that's me, I mean that was me, only now I've come out like the butterfly out of a grub. [*Aside.*] I forgot that this is Germany. [*Aloud.*] Ja.

Waiter Ach! der Herr sprech Deutsch?

Box Yah. [*Aside.*] That's more like a nigger. [*Aloud.*] On second thoughts, nein.

Waiter Vill you your name in dese book write?

[*Presenting visitors' book.*

Box I will. [*Writes.*] Don Jose John de Boxos Cazadores Regalias, Spain.

Waiter Dank you, milor!

[*Exit c.*

Box We know what we are, but we never know what we shall be. I am not quite clear at present, by the way, what I am, let alone what I *shall* be. If anybody three months ago had said to me, "Box, my boy, you are a grandee of Spain"—I should have said that he was a—in point of fact I shouldn't have believed him. But still I am—that is, partially so—I'm gradually becoming one. At present I'm only half a grandee. Three months ago a friend, my legal adviser, a law stationer's senior clerk, near Chancery Lane, said to me, "Box, my boy, you've got Spanish blood in you." I said that I had suspected as much from my peculiar and extreme partiality for the vegetable called a Spanish onion, and I was going to a doctor, when my friend and legal adviser said to me, "Box, my boy, I don't mean *that*. I mean that your great grandmother was of Spanish extraction." I replied that I had heard that they had extracted my great grandmother from that quarter, "I came across some papers," continued my legal adviser, "which allude to her as Donna Isidora y Caballeros, Carvalhos y Cazadores y Regalias, Salamanca, Spain, who

married John Box, trader, of Eliza Lane, St. Margaret's Wharf Wapping. Date and all correct. Go," says he—I mean my legal adviser—"go to Spain, and claim your title, your estates, and your money, and I'll stand in with you, and take half the profits." I was struck by this remarkably handsome offer, and went down to Margate to cultivate a Spanish moustache and think about it. Whenever I want to think about anything deeply, I go down to Margate, Well, one morning as I was examining the progress of my moustache, after shaving my chin and letting out some of the blue blood of the Hidalgos in a most tremendous gash, judge of my astonishment, when, walking on the beach, in among the donkeys and the Ethiopian serenaders, I saw, in widow's weeds, as majestic as ever, Penelope Anne! [*Sings.*] "I saw her for a moment, but methinks I see her now, with the wreath of—something or other—upon her—something brow"—and then I lost sight of her. But my Spanish blood was up. The extraction from the sunny South boiled in my veins—boiled over, when I learnt, on referring to the visitor's list, that Penelope Anne was the relict of the short-breath'd—I mean short lived but virtuous—Knox, who had left her his entire fortune. All my long-stifled passion returned—the passion which the existence of a Wiggins, her first, had not quenched, which the ephemeral life of a Knox had not extinguished, a passion which I have felt for her before I knew that the blue ink—I mean the blue blood, of the Hidalgos danced in my veins, and while she was only a sweet village maiden eighteen years old, and known to all as Miss Penelope Anne, of Park Place, Pimlico! I determined to go out and throw myself at her feet, declare my passion, and take nothing for an answer except "Box—John—I'm yours truly, Penelope!" I couldn't present myself before her with a scrubbing-brush on my upper lip. So that afternoon I sacrificed Mars to Venus—I mean I shaved off my moustache for the sake of Penelope Anne. The next morning—Toothache, wasn't the name for what I suffered. Face-ache fails to describe my agonies. Neuralgia doesn't give the faintest idea of my tortures. The left side of my face looked exactly as if I was holding a large dumpling in my mouth, or a gigantic ribston-pippin which I couldn't swallow. Swallow! Not a bit of food passed these lips, except slops, beef-tea, and tea without the beef, for days. At the end of a week I was a shadow. Penelope Anne had gone. Where, no one knew.

Somebody said they thought it was the Continent. I bought a map and looked out the Continent, but it wasn't in that. I suppose it was an old edition—there have been so many changes, and they're building everywhere—so I consulted my medical man and my legal adviser. The first said, "Get change of air. Go abroad!" The second said, "Seize the opportunity and go to Spain. And," he added, "come home by the Continent." That suited me down to the ground. I should get my title, my lands, and my money, meeting Penelope Anne on the Continent. As I was coming back I should be able to offer her the hand and heart of either Don Jose John de Boxos y Cazadores y Regalias y Caballeros y Carvalhos of Salamanca, Spain, or of plain John Box, of Barnsbury. So here I am. I haven't got the whole title yet, as the Spanish gentleman and I didn't hit it off exactly—If I'd only known what he was talking about, it would have shortened the proceedings. However, as that remark applies to all legal business, I couldn't quarrel with a foreigner on that point. Besides, if you quarrel with a Spaniard, his southern blood can't stand it. He stabs you. He's sorry for it afterwards, but that's his noble nature. So I've adopted half the title, and the rest will be sent on to me if the suit is gained. But up to this moment I've not met Penelope Anne. I've had so much of the wines of Spain, that my medical man wrote and advised me to try the waters of Germany. So here I am. [*Takes up paper.*] What's this? *Comic Journal*, um. "We are sorry to announce the death of—" um, um. [*Reads.*] "*Spain on the eve of a crisis.*"—There were three while I was there. Nobody took any notice of them. What's this? "Hotel der Schwein and die Pfeife"—that's here—"Mrs. Penelope Anne Knox."—Don Jose de Boxos, she's yours. You've only got to propose, and she's yours. Tell her you're a Spanish grandee, and offer her a position as Spanish grand~~she~~. Don Boxos, you've only got to give yourself a brush up, and she's yours. [*Taking up Cox's glass of water which he has left on table.*] I wish myself every possible success! To my future happiness! [*Drinks.*] Ugh! [*Suddenly makes fearfully wry faces. The clock strikes.*]

Re-enter COX, R.H.

Cox Punctual to the moment. [*Seeing the glass empty.*] Confound it,

dash it—who's taken my sulphur wasser? I say who [*Sees Box, who is slowly recovering.*]—Have you—[*Starts.*] Can I believe my eyes?

Box I don't know.

Cox It must be—.

Box If it must be, then in that case—[*Opens his eyes and recognises Cox.*]
Ah!

Cox Box!

Box Cox!

[*They are about to rush into each other's arms, when they think better of it and shake hands rather coolly.*]

Box How d'ye do?

Cox How are you?

Box Very well, sir.

Cox Very well, sir! [*Aside.*] I don't like the look of this.

Box [*Aside.*] I don't like the taste of that.

Cox [*Aside.*] What's Box here for?

Box [*Aside.*] Has Cox been trying to poison himself—and poisoned me?

Cox [*Aside.*] He mustn't stay here.

Box [*Aside.*] Cox must go. I don't think I feel as well as I did.

Cox Ahem!

Box Ahem!

Cox I beg your pardon, you were going to say—

Box On the contrary, I interrupted you—

Cox No, you speak first. *Seniores priores.*

Box In that case you have the preference. Why, I'm quite a chicken by the side of you.

Cox Pooh, sir.

Box Well, if you don't like "chicken" I'll say gosling.

Cox Don't be absurd, sir. At what age were you born?

Box What's that to you? I'm six years younger than you, whatever you are.

Cox So am I. So you speak first.

Box This is absurd. I'm only a visitor. You're a resident.

Cox No I'm not; I'm only *ong parsong*.

Box Ong Parsong? Why, you don't mean to say you've become a clergyman? Archbishop Cox, I congratulate you.

Cox Don't be a fool. Are you stopping here?

Box Well, that depends. Are you?

Cox Well— [Shrugging his shoulders and stretching out his hands.

Box Ah! [Imitates action.] That's exactly my case.

Cox It's time for me to go out and take the waters. You've taken mine for me.

Box If you don't feel any better after it than I do—What's the effect of the waters?

Cox [Aside.] I'll frighten him. [Aloud.] If you're unaccustomed to them—poisonous.

Box Good gracious! The first draught then is—

Cox Fatal. Deadly.

Box Then you don't have much chance of getting accustomed to it. You look very well.

Cox Yes. I could have taken that glass with impunity. It was my eighteenth tumbler.

Box Then I'm safe. I began with the eighteenth. Aha! I shall smoke a cigar and read the paper.

Cox [Aside.] The paper!

Box Don't stop for me. [Aside.] I wonder if he's seen the news.

Cox [Aside.] He musn't know she's here. He's got it. [Seeing Box reading the paper.] Would you allow me to look at the paper?

Box There's nothing in it.

Cox [Coming up to the table and putting his hand suddenly down on it.] Sir!

Box [Taking no notice.] Come in.

Cox No, sir, I shall not come in. I'm going to come out, sir, and come out pretty strongly too. [Suddenly pathetic.] Box, my boy—

Box [The same.] Cox, my boy.

[Turns and allows the smoke of his pipe to come under Cox's nose just as Cox is attempting to take the paper.

Cox [Sneezing.] Excuse my emotion. [Sneezes.

Box It does honor to your head and heart—specially to your head.

[Offers his pocket-handkerchief.

Cox Thank you. I can't forget that we were once brothers.

Box We were.

Cox We had no secrets from each other. At least you had none from me, had you?

Box No, not unless you had any from me.

Cox Then I will confide in you. I don't mind telling you—

Box I have no objection to inform you—

Cox That I am—

Box So am I—

Cox Here—

Box Exactly my case—

Cox To marry—

Box Yes, to espouse—

Cox Eh?

Box It's the same thing.

Cox Oh. To marry Penelope Anne.

Box Penelope Anne! So am I!

Cox You!

Box I.

Cox Then, Box, I'm sorry for you. You've no chance. Go.

Box On the contrary, Cox, as there can't be the smallest possibility of your being accepted, it's for you to retire. *Allez.*

Cox I shan't *allez.*

Box No more shall I.

Cox Mr. Box, since we last met, circumstances have changed. You no longer speak to a gentleman—

Box You needn't explain *that*—

Cox I say, to a gentleman connected with the Hatting interest. No, my family solicitor discovered that my great grandfather had been a Venetian Count, or a Margrave, or a Hargrave, or a something of that sort, and that therefore my proper title was Count Cox The Landgrave.

Box The *Landgrave*—you might as well be a tombstone at once.

Cox I am serious. I have come over to mix pleasure with business, and offer to Penelope Anne the hand of The Landgrave, or of the Venetian Count. So yield to the aristocracy; and, Printer, withdraw.

Box Excuse me, Cox, but since our parting I have discovered that in my veins flows the blue blood of the *Hidalgos*—

Cox How many "goes?"

Box Don't be profane—of the *Hidalgos* of Spain. I have already assumed half the title. The rest will be sent on to me in a few days, and I am here to offer to Penelope Anne the hand and coronet of Don José John de Boxos y Caballeros y Regalias de Salamanca. *Fuego*, as we say in Spain, *Fuego*.

Cox Never, while I live, shall you marry Penelope Anne.

Box Never, while I marry Penelope Anne, shall you live. I've Spanish blood in my veins. Pistols!

Cox Swords!

Box When?

Cox Now. [*Clock strikes.*] That's the second glass of water you have made me lose. You are ruining my health.

Box Then let me shoot you at once. By the way, I haven't got a pistol.

Cox Paltry evasion! There's a shooting gallery here where they let 'em out by the hour.

Box How many hours shall we take 'em for?

Cox Well—we've got to pay in advance.

Box Well, you advance the money and I'll pay.

Cox No. We'll borrow it from the waiter.

Box Yes, and leave it to be paid by our executors out of the estate. Come.

DUETT.

BOTH.

(*"Suoni la tromba."*)

Off to the tented field!

Pistols! revolvers they shall be!

Sooner than ever yield

I'll fight for death or victoree!

Box [*Aside.*]

Yes! he must be my target

Must the unhappy Cox.

Cox [*Aside.*] What will they say at Margate
 When I have shot poor Box.

Both Ah!

“Off to the tented field, &c. *They repeat the duett and are about to exit, c.; when they stop at the door and return.*

Box Hem! I say, sir.

Cox Well, sir?

Box I intend to exterminate you.

Cox I mean to blow you to atoms.

Box But if we *don't* exterminate each other it will be rather awkward.

Cox Yes. I shouldn't like to be wounded. It hurts.

Box Besides, if we both came off without our noses, or with only two eyes between us, we should neither be able to marry Penelope Anne.

Cox True. I have it.

Box So have I.

Cox The Lady shall decide.

Box **Just** exactly what I was going to propose.

[*A female voice heard without, singing a jodel.*

Cox 'Tis she! What superb notes.

Box It's a rich voice.

Cox She's a rich widow.

Both She comes.

[PENELOPE ANNE appears c. in ultra Parisian watering-place toilette. *They bring her down between them, each taking a hand.*

Both Penelope Anne!

[*Both kneel R. and L.C.*

Penelope Mr. James Cox. Ah!

[*Starts.*

Box You've frightened her. You're so ugly.

Penelope Mr. John Box. Oh!

[*Faints, and falls into a chair placed c.*

Cox You've killed her. You Gorilla.

Box Gorilla! [*They are about to fight, when she screams again.*] What shall we do?

Cox [*Excitedly.*] Cold key—Senna—no, I mean Salts.

Box [*More excitedly.*] Pooh! Cold water—with something in it.

Cox Where's the sulphur water—throw it—

Penelope [*Shrieking.*] Ah! [*Rising.*] How dare you! [*Calls.*] Husband!

Box She said Husband. Dearest— [*PENELOPE slaps his face.*]

Cox She means me. I knew it. Angel—

[*PENELOPE repeats the slap on HIS face.*]

Box You *did* say "Husband?" Surely you cannot be blind to the fascination of Don Boxos de Regalias Salamanca—

Cox When you said "Husband" you must have been dreaming of Count Cornelius Cox, Landgrave.

Penelope Gentlemen. Mr. Cox—Mr. Box—if the truth must be told—

Box It will be painful for Cox—but tell it, brave woman, tell it.

Cox It will be harrowing for Box—but out with it, courageous Penelope, out with it.

Penelope Well—when—I said—"Husband"—I meant—

Cox Me—

Penelope No—

Box Ha! ha! hooray! Me—

Penelope No—

Both Then whom *did* you mean?

Penelope When I said "Husband" I meant—

MAJOR BOUNCER, *suddenly entering, c.*

Bouncer Me. [*Sings in military style.*] "Rataplan! Rataplan!"

Both Him! You! Bouncer!

Bouncer Major Bouncer, of the Banbury Light Horse, at your service. We were married this morning.

Cox Stop! Virtuous but misguided Penelope. Bouncer is married already!

All Ah!

Cox Behold! and tremble! Read it, Box. [*Giving newspaper.*]

Box [*Reads.*] At the hotel So-and-so--um—Major and Mrs. Bouncer.

[PENELOPE and BOUNCER laugh.]

Cox They laugh! Horrible depravity.

Bouncer Nonsense! Mrs. Bouncer mentioned there—

Box Is not the Mrs. Bouncer we see here.

Bouncer True. The Mrs. Bouncer *here* is Mrs. Penelope Bouncer, *My* Mrs. Bouncer; but the Mrs. Bouncer *there* is your old landlady, your Mrs. Bouncer, *now*, the Dowager Lady Bouncer.

Box and Cox Good gracious!

Box Has she any money?

Cox Is she well off?

Bouncer No. I support her entirely.

Box Oh! Then bless you, Bouncer. Persevere. Go on supporting her.

Cox I congratulate you, Bouncer. You may keep your Dowager to yourself.

Penelope And if you like to join us at the wedding-breakfast—

Bouncer We shall be delighted—

Penelope Now, as always—

Bouncer To see—

Penelope Two old friends.

Bouncer Come, join hands. I'm an old soldier.

Box You are.

Bouncer I've stolen a march upon you.

Cox You have.

Bouncer But forgive and forget.

Box I'll forget you with pleasure, but forgive—oh! Penelope Anne!

Cox Well, I'll forgive you; but don't do it again.

Bouncer I promise.

Penelope So do I.

Box Do you? Then there's my hand, and when I've got my Castle in Spain you shall come and stop with me. [*Aside.*] I'll have old Bouncer up before the Inquisition.

Cox And when I've got my Palazzo di Coxo at Venice, you shall always find a knife and fork at your service. [*Aside.*] I'll take him out for a walk by a canal and upset him.

[*Enter WAITER with tray, c, which he puts down. Everything is placed ready for déjeuner à la fourchette.*

Waiter Das Frühstück ist fertig.

All Eh?

Waiter Break-a-fast.

[*They sit.*

Box Permit me—

Cox And me—

Box To propose—

Cox The health—

Both Of the Happy Pair. Major and Mrs. Bouncer. Hip! hip! hip! Hurrah!

Box [*Singing.*] It's a way we have in the army.

[*They all join in chorus.*

SOLOS AND CHORUS.

[*“Ha, ha!” “Les Dames de la Halle.”*]

Box I drink the health of Madame Bouncer,
And of the Major Bouncer, too.

Soprano et Tenor Too too too too too too too!

Bassi Too too too too too too too!

Cox Of his foes he is a trouncer,
Equal to any Horse Guard Blue.

All Blue, &c. [*As before*].

Box All our jealousy we smother
From this happy bridal day.

Cox We'll embrace him like a brother

Box And a sister—if I may!

Penelope Anne Ah!

Box and Cox [Together.] Viva, Viva Rataplan !

Oh ! Rataplan Penelope Anne,

Oh ! Rataplan Penelope-elope

Anne, Anne, Anne !

CHORUS [*Including the WAITER, all at table standing up, glasses in hand, convivially.*]

Viva, viva Rataplan !

Oh ! Rataplan Penelope Anne !

Oh ! Rataplan Penelope-elope

Anne, Anne, Anne !

TABLEAU.—BOUNCER *on chair, with dish-cover and carving-knife.* WAITER *at side, waving napkin.* PENELOPE *between COX and BOX in centre*

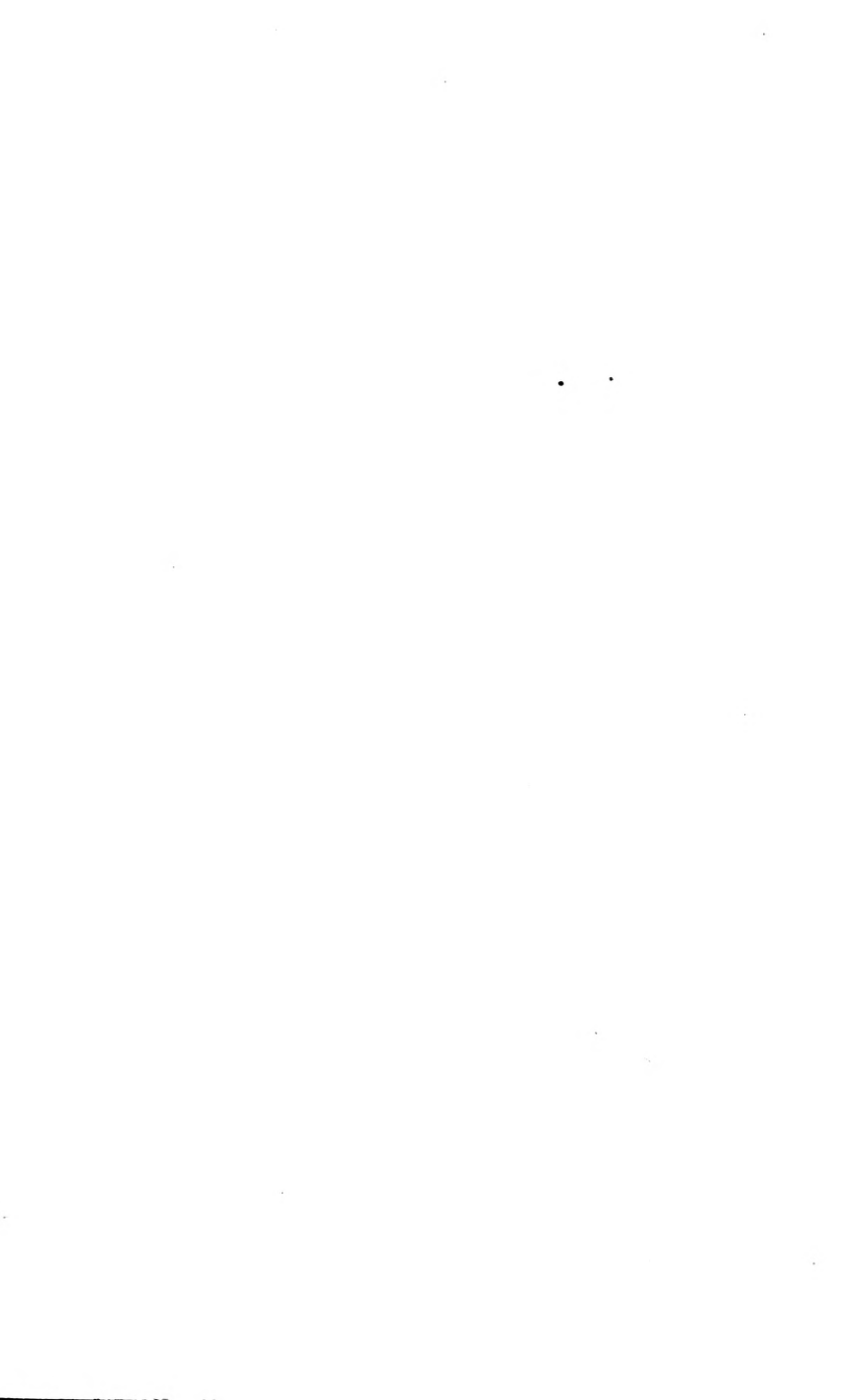
Curtain descends.











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